GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS

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Photograph by Clifton Adams

SHOOTING TO KILL—AN EPIDEMIC

When Ol' Man River boils along at flood stage and upsets man's shipping and commerce, he, nevertheless, carries a cargo—of infection, disease, and epidemic. The Red Cross needs to be on hand to ward off pneumonia, influenza, malaria, typhoid fever, and smallpox. Recently ammunition against these diseases was rushed to flooded areas by plane and delivered by parachute. Teachers inoculated their pupils during class periods. The picture shows a complaining victim of the 1927 Mississippi flood being kept healthy in spite of himself (see Bulletin No. 1).

HOW TEACHERS MAY OBTAIN THE BULLETINS

The Geographic News Bulletins are published weekly throughout the school year (thirty issues) and will be mailed to teachers in the United States and its possessions for one year upon receipt of 25 cents in stamps or money order (in Canada, 50 cents). Entered as second-class matter, January 27, 1922, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized February 9, 1922.

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Fitting a Strait-Jacket to the Father of Waters

IF THE Mississippi River in flood time should break all its levees and spread over its natural flood plain, the water would inundate an area almost as large as Ireland. In this vast lake would be mingled waters from 31 of the 48 States of the Union, and two Canadian Provinces.

The Father of Waters is one of the toughest enemies that the United States has ever fought. Army engineers have battled him for a century and have not yet clinched their victory. In the last decade alone, federal funds spent on the war against the Mississippi have approximately equalled the combined cost of the War of 1812 and the War with Mexico.

Levees Nearly as Long as Great Wall of China

Two thousand miles of earthen levees, nearly as long as the Great Wall of China, guide the path of "Ol' Man River" from Cape Girardeau, Missouri, just above Cairo, Illinois, to the sea. Since the last disastrous Mississippi flood of 1927 there has been added to the levees 600,000,000 cubic yards of earth, twice as much as was excavated for the Panama Canal. The total amount of earth in the levees amounts to far more.

Levees alone make possible the day-to-day existence of New Orleans, 100 miles from the Mississippi's mouth. Built on low ground, the entire city is below high water mark; in fact, its site slopes downward slightly away from the river.

The vicinity of Cairo, Illinois, where the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers meet, once was reached by an arm of the Gulf of Mexico. In the long ages since then, the silt-laden waters of the Mississippi have built more and more land below the site of Cairo, until today the city is 600 miles from the sea. Through this alluvial valley the Mississippi winds serpentlike, meandering so much that it flows 1,000 miles to travel an air-line distance of 600 miles. In recent times it has extended its delta into the Gulf of Mexico, one mile every 21 years.

In effect the long levee system provides a sort of canal for the Mississippi from Cairo to the sea, preventing it from spreading over its natural flood plain in times of high water. High bluffs do away with the necessity of levees on the east side of the river for about half the distance from Cairo to the Gulf. They extend most of the way from Cairo to Memphis, Tennessee, and from Vicksburg, Mississippi, to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Levees guard the west bank of the river for its entire length.

The alluvial valley of the Mississippi, between Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and the Gulf of Mexico, contains about 30,000 square miles, and the levee system is intended to protect more than 20,500 square miles of this, equal in area to Maryland and Massachusetts, from any flood. The remaining area, about as large as Vermont, is protected most of the time.

To keep the Mississippi within its banks as far as possible, the army since 1927 has been adding an average of three feet in height to levees which previously were 15 to 30 feet high, and giving the river more elbow room by straightening and deepening the main channel.

Floodways Carry Surplus Water

At bends in the river and other points, earthen levees are sometimes scoured and undermined by swift currents. To prevent this, the army has developed various types of huge "mats," which are placed under water against the levee sides at danger points. They are made of interwoven branches, or of small concrete slabs linked together by metal fastenings, or of asphalt, laid in huge sheets on land and allowed to slide into the water at the desired place.

But to build levees high enough and strong enough to confine the largest floods would be impractical, so when Ol' Man River swells so much he must overflow, the army plans for him to do it with least possible damage. Back of and parallel to the main channel are floodways, areas of low lands into which surplus flood waters are guided. The floodways have their own levees, to prevent the excess water from spreading too far. Down the floodways, with a minimum of damage, rolls the surplus water, eventually rejoining the main stream below the danger point, or reaching the Gulf by another route.

At the upstream ends of the floodways are "fuse plug levees" which work like a steam engine's safety valve. They are levees so built that when the river rises to the danger point, the "fuse plug" is overtopped by the flood, which then breaks through this portion of the levee and carves its own way into the basin below.

There are three important floodways on the west side of the Mississippi. One, between Cairo and New Madrid, Missouri, already has been opened by dynamiting fuse plugs and helped lower the flood stage at the former city. Another extends from the point where the

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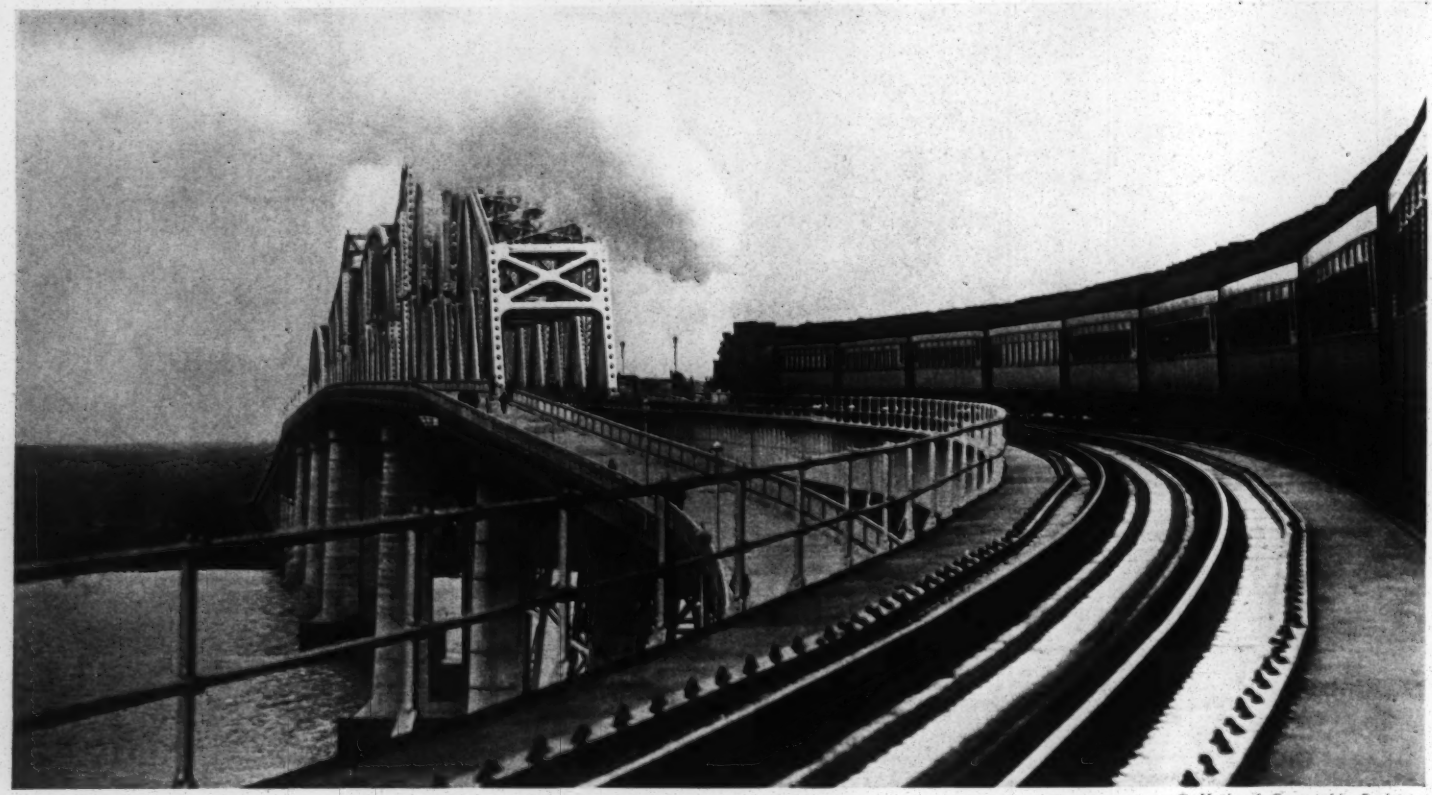

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SPANNING THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI FROM "COAST TO COAST"

The only bridge across the river between its mouth and Vicksburg is this huge structure just above New Orleans, about 4½ miles long. In anticipation of big ships and high water, builders gave it 135 feet of clearance. It has separate lanes for highway and railroad traffic (see Bulletins No. 1 and 3).

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Floods Call for Special Dictionary

ALONG with the recent floods of the Ohio and the Mississippi rivers, has come a flood of strange terms in the newspapers, magazines, and radio descriptions —terms which are generally unfamiliar to those who live outside of the great central valley region of the United States.

Here are some tabloid definitions of phrases most commonly used:

FLOODWAY: Low area near main stream, with dikes on either side, into which surplus flood water is diverted to relieve pressure in main river. Water in floodways eventually flows back to main river farther downstream, except near Gulf of Mexico, where it reaches the sea directly.

LEVEE: Earth embankment with broad base, gently sloping sides and flat top, built at edge of, or at some distance back from, normal course of river, to keep high water within bounds (see illustration, next page).

REVETMENT: Layer or mattress of woven brush, cement slabs, or asphalt placed on levee face to protect it against scouring and undermining by river currents.

LEVEE BULKHEAD: Temporary barrier of sand bags or other material placed on top of levee or seawall to keep waves from lapping over top and starting breaks.

FUSE PLUG LEVEE: Section of levee at head of a floodway, separating it from main stream, slightly lower than main levee, designed so that flood water reaching a certain level will flow over top and cut its own channel into the floodway.

PERMEABLE PILE DIKE: Series of heavy piles built out from shore to retard a swift current. Slowed up, the current deposits silt and at the same time is forced into channel surveyed for it by army engineers. Generally used for narrowing wide sections of river.

SPUR DIKE: Section of levee or piles extending into a stream at or near neck of land, used to prevent current from cutting through neck.

SPILLWAY: Artificial channel, paved or otherwise reinforced, to prevent erosion, through which surplus flood waters can be drained from main stream to nearby lake or reservoir, to relieve flood pressure.

CREVASSE: Break in levee, caused by water flowing over top and cutting deeper channel.

SAND BOIL: Upheaval of earth produced by water forced under levee or land back of levee by pressure of flood. May cause break unless surrounded by sandbag circular levee of its own (see illustration following Bulletin No. 4).

BACKWATER AREA: Region surrounding junction of tributary and main stream, into which water backs up when main stream is in flood.

OX-BOW: A U-shaped or crescent bend in the river, or a U-shaped section stranded as a pond when the river cuts a new channel across the neck of the "U."

STAGE: Height of river measured on a gauge whose zero point is at extreme low water level. Sixty-foot stage means river is 60 feet above extreme low water.

Some of the major tributaries of the Mississippi and their flooded areas are described in "Indiana Journey," *National Geographic Magazine*, September, 1936; "Penn's Land of Modern Miracles," July, 1935; "A Patriotic Pilgrimage to Eastern National Parks," June, 1934; "Ohio, The Gateway State," May, 1932; "The Travels of George Washington," January, 1932; "Illinois, Crossroads of the Continent," May, 1931; "Pirate Rivers and Their Prizes," July, 1926; and "The Origin of American State Names," August, 1920.

See also in the GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS: "Ohio River System Drains Area Almost as Large as Texas," week of February 15, 1937; and "Flood Area a Region of Narrow, Crowded Valleys," week of April 6, 1936.

Bulletin No. 2, February 22, 1937.

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Arkansas River joins the Mississippi, to the Red River in Louisiana, following a course between the main river and Macon Ridge to the west. The third follows the Atchafalaya River and two parallel channels from the Red River to the Gulf, west of the main stream.

To keep the flood crest from rising too high, also, the army is building storage reservoirs on tributaries of the Mississippi, to withhold water temporarily from the main stream.

Low-lying New Orleans, its highest ground only ten feet above the Gulf of Mexico, would be swamped if a flood of major proportions flowed solely down the main channel of the river. But two safety valves insure the safety of the Crescent City even from what the army engineers call a "super flood."

Such a flood would bring 3,000,000 cubic feet of water per second swirling down above the first major diversion point. Half of this, however, or 1,500,000 cubic feet, can be diverted far upstream near Angola, Louisiana—110 miles on an air line above New Orleans—and turned into floodways that follow the Atchafalaya River into the Gulf of Mexico to the west. Farther down, 20 miles above the city, another 250,000 cubic feet per second can be diverted through the giant Bonnet Carré spillway into huge Lake Pontchartrain, which connects with the Gulf.

Only 1,250,000 cubic feet per second would roll between the New Orleans levees, and the levees can hold back this amount without danger of overflow, the engineers calculate, at a stage of 20 feet above low water.

The Mississippi at New Orleans is 40 feet deep along the docks, 200 feet at midstream, and from one third to two thirds of a mile wide. From the Gulf of Mexico to Baton Rouge a channel of 35 feet is maintained for navigation, but at some places the stream is 200 feet deep.

Note: The Mississippi flood area is described in "The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927," *National Geographic Magazine*, September, 1927; and "When the Father of Waters Goes on a Rampage," April, 1920.

Bulletin No. 1, February 22, 1937.

Drawn by James M. Darley

THE MISSISSIPPI EXACTS TRIBUTE FROM TRIBUTARIES IN MORE THAN HALF OF THE UNITED STATES

Water from little mountain streams, lakes, swamps, underground rivers, and full-size river systems in 31 States and two Canadian Provinces eventually reach the Gulf of Mexico by the Mississippi route. Its volume of water at last becomes so great that the adjacent countryside has become a miniature of the Netherlands in self-defense.

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New Orleans, The Crescent City, Now a Full Moon

NEW ORLEANS, where the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association is holding its annual meeting, is the very home town of achievement. Like the decorative iron grillwork, delicate as paper lace on a valentine, which is so admired on the gates and balconies of the Vieux Carré, or old French quarter, the city is beautiful—but strong enough to endure.

Threatened on three sides and from beneath by water, New Orleans has converted the menace into many miles of busy waterfront. Although 100 miles up the Mississippi, the city is one of the country's important ports.

Plagues Gave Name to the "Dead Church"

The Civil War stopped river traffic for five years, and railroad competition changed the route of shipping. New Orleans began to wither on a sapless stem. But now the city is served by a dozen railroads and by reviving water transport, too.

Plagues and epidemics, almost annual events for a century, decimated the town. Old St. Anthony's became the "dead church" because it was continuously the scene of funerals. Three separate drainage systems with powerful pumps have conquered the malaria menace, and yellow fever has been exiled since 1905. Now the city's health score is high.

When unused canals were drained, they were converted into some of the widest streets on record. Imposing Canal Street, bisecting the business districts, is 171 feet wide, with space for four street car tracks down the rose-bordered center, and traffic lanes on either side—indeed a "Main Street" de luxe. The Jefferson Davis Parkway is 17 feet wider than the Champs Elysées in Paris.

Canal Street, for all its commercial superiority, puts pleasure before business when "mystic krewes" of Momus or Comus or Proteus begin to prepare for the century-old spree of the Mardi Gras. Then this un-typical American "Main Street" is packed solid with fantastic parades and masked revelers.

Vieux Carré Has Flavor of Its Own

True haunt of this Gallic spirit is the Vieux Carré, the original "Old Rectangle," eleven blocks long and five blocks deep, from which New Orleans spread a thin crescent of civilization along the river's big curve in the century after its founding in 1718. Now the city has extended for twelve miles along the river's S-curve, and filled out into a full moon of 196 square miles. But the Creole architecture and romantic traditions of the Vieux Carré give a distinctive flavor to the entire area, and set it apart from all others of the United States.

Streets are narrow here, for the French who established this gatekeeper of the Mississippi wanted shade and comfort in a subtropical climate. Mellow pink, gray, or yellow plaster over some of the once elegant brick houses is crumbling away, giving them the "solemn look of gentility in rags," as George Washington Cable described it.

Famous names haunt the Vieux Carré. General Beauregard's home at 934 Royal Street, Audubon's poverty-stricken quarters at 505 Dauphine Street, Adelina Patti's Court at 631 Royal Street are no more popular than the spots associated with Cable's fictitious characters—"Madame John's Legacy" at 632 Dumaine Street, one of the city's oldest houses, or the cottage of Kristian Koppig, 707 Dumaine Street. The "Haunted House" bears the stigma of mistreating slaves, and the Old Absinthe House has an unbroken tradition for distinctive refreshments.

Heart of the old section is Jackson Square, named after American occupation,

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HOW TO OBTAIN THE CUMULATIVE INDEX

The new Cumulative Index to the *National Geographic Magazine* (1899-1936) can be obtained from the Washington, D. C., headquarters of the National Geographic Society, bound in brown cloth. It will be sent to any address in the United States for $1.00 postpaid. The form below may be used for convenience in ordering.

The National Geographic Society
School Service Department
Washington, D. C.

Enclosed please find $..... for which please send me..... copies of the Cumulative Index.

Name..... Address.....

City..... State.....

Photograph courtesy U. S. War Department

WHERE THE STEAMBOAT TRAVELS OVERHEAD

Levees bolster up the lower Mississippi until water level is sometimes well above the level of the ground. To a worker in the neighboring fields a steamboat appears to be crawling along an earthen ridge. Thickness of the levee is indicated by the gradual upward slope. Thickness, however, is not always a guarantee of safety in areas like this, where the Father of Waters has to be looked up to in times of flood.

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A Power Plant for Facts in the Newest Cumulative Index

WHERE is Deli, where Dug-Gye Jong? Where are the homes of the Danakil tribesmen, the Dayaks, the Dinkas? What is a dasheen, dumboy, dovekie? Where, besides Africa, are great deserts found?

The National Geographic Society's new Cumulative Index answers these and many other questions in the nine pages devoted to articles in the *National Geographic Magazine* indexed under "D."

The Cumulative Index lists alphabetically more than 13,400 references to *The Magazine,* from 1899 to 1936 inclusive. Used with only the back issues of the past few months, it is a speedy guide to more facts than a normal memory can store. In the hands of teacher or student it becomes a private power plant, converting energy and curiosity into useful information.

An X-Ray for the Background of History, Past and Current

Does your choice reference book call the Netherlands "Holland," or Surinam "Dutch Guiana," or Puerto Rico "Porto Rico?" Does it omit Latvia or Trans-Jordan or Iraq? Then it deserves to be retired as an antique. The Cumulative Index also points out that Persia is now Iran, Nizhni Novgorod has been re-christened Gorki, and that the island containing Haiti is again known as Hispaniola.

Newspaper reading (for history and geography in the making) is aided when the Cumulative Index turns an X-ray on the geographic background of events. Why will the first complete transpacific air mail flight next month, denied a terminal in China, land nevertheless in Macao? The Index points to the answer in the *National Geographic Magazine* for September, 1932: "Macao, 'Land of Sweet Sadness.'" Macao, although in China, is Portuguese territory.

What social and economic conditions prevail in Bulgaria, where the king has just given all married mothers the privilege of voting? Again the Index has a word for it: "Bulgaria, Farm Land Without a Farmhouse," August, 1932. That the question of a Nicaraguan Canal, now before the United States Senate, is not a new one is proved by the Index, which lists nine articles on the subject, beginning as far back as 1899.

All Nature Subjects, Acorns to Zebras

The Cumulative Index contains also a 60-page illustrated foreword by Dr. Gilbert Grosvenor, "The National Geographic Society and Its Magazine," including a list of the eminent explorers to whom The Society has awarded medals. A complete list of the 52 expeditions which The Society has sponsored reveals important contributions to geographic knowledge.

A separate index for maps, which contains over a thousand listings, in the back of the volume, leads to discoveries which many atlases do not reveal. The "island" of Malta, for instance, is actually three islands. Another map shows a chain of forts along the frontier, recommended by George Washington.

The Cumulative Index makes clear distinctions between areas frequently grouped under some vague term, such as "Oceania," which more properly should be Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia.

The nature lover will be guided to suggested reading and pictures, many of them in color, on more than 200 nature subjects. Topics range from acorns to zebras, from albatrosses to whales.

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for the hero who defeated here in 1815 the men who had defeated Napoleon, and was later made seventh President for it. Earlier the square was called Place d' Armes by the French who established it, but the Spaniards who followed them and rebuilt the district after two fires called it Plaza de Armas. The St. Louis Cathedral and the Cabildo, the twin apartment houses facing each other on opposite sides of the square, and the renovated French Market are Creole landmarks. Beauregard Square was once called Congo Square, and stories of slaves performing African dances there are repeated with modern whispers of voodooism.

The Mississippi waterfront of New Orleans is almost a continuous wharf, receiving bananas and coffee and shipping cotton.

Note: The beauty, quaintness, and charm of New Orleans are described and illustrated in "Louisiana, Land of Perpetual Romance," *National Geographic Magazine*, April, 1930.

See also in the GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS: "New Orleans' Old French Market, Source of Creole Delicacies," week of February 3, 1936.

Bulletin No. 3, February 22, 1937.

Photograph by Edwin L. Wisherd

A CREOLE WAY TO SAY "KEEP OFF THE BALCONY"

This third-floor lookout at 520 Royal Street, New Orleans, gave occupants a chance to watch the colorful life passing on the *banquettes*, or sidewalks, of the Vieux Carré, or old Creole quarter. But the fan-shaped grille at the balcony's side prevented unwelcome visitors from hopping over and joining the party! The half-disguised "S" at the fan's apex is supposed to be the trademark of François Seignouret, an importer from Bordeaux, who was renowned in old New Orleans for the graceful chairs and chests he fashioned.

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George Washington's Never-Never Land—The "Cherry Tree" Farm

ALTHOUGH the calendar has recorded 205 years since his birth, there is one place where George Washington has never grown up. It lies across the Rappahannock River from Fredericksburg, Virginia—the Ferry Farm, or Washington's boyhood home. But by any other name, it is still the legendary home of the cherry tree and the land of the dollar-throwing.

Anniversary visitors this year will find that four hundred cherry trees have sprung up where one was—or was not—cut down. The road leading to the farm has been planted with a double row of them. There are 200 flowering trees, presented by Japan, and 200 of the fruit-bearing variety from the orchards of Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Michigan.

This flamboyant boulevard becomes a living memorial to a story that will not die. Cherry blossoms now can fall where, according to the myth-mongering biographer, Parson Weems, once a cherry tree fell before the chopping of a naughty George. They tardily replace the stump over which George confessed his vandalism to an enraged father: "I can't tell a lie, Pa; you know I can't tell a lie. I did cut it with my hatchet."

George Killed at Least One Cherry Tree, by Remote Control

The words are Weems's. Whether or not they were ever George's, they climax an anecdote which has been, like the mistreated tree, cut down at the roots. It thrives, nevertheless, in the popular folklore of early America, and brings visitors and a cherry tree boulevard to the Ferry Farm.

So vigorous is the story, in fact, that it has actually killed another tree. A flourishing 20-foot cherry tree was pointed out for years as a collateral descendant of young George's victim. Visitors showed their belief and their veneration by chopping off bits of it as souvenirs. Now it is a tall rotting stump.

The Ferry Farm rolls gently over several hillsides and down a steep bank to a riverside meadow at the Rappahannock's edge. A road from the King's Highway leads in toward the white home, tenant houses, and barns, all comparatively new. The only structure surviving from Washington's occupancy is a one-room frame shack which the budding surveyor used as an office.

Scene of Fabled Feats of "Strong-Man" George

About the size of two piano crates, the "office" was scarcely large enough for big-boned George to take a pair of strides back and forth in. Now in its old age it has been taken under the wing of a two-story tenant house, and annexed to the latter by an extra tin roof, which projects several feet on three sides of the little office like a sunbonnet, with the brick chimney sticking through.

Stories, however, have outlasted structures. Although there are few undisputed facts about the Boyhood Home, this rich-in-legend farm bears a bumper crop of anecdotes. Admirers repeat that George could and did demonstrate his muscle by standing on the river bank below the house and slinging a Spanish dollar across the Rappahannock. Others, recalling his reluctance to throw money away, insist that he tossed a stone. Skeptics who refuse to be fans of his forward-passing ability were shown that money can still go that far, a year ago today, when Walter Johnson, of baseball fame, pitched two silver dollars to the far bank.

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The whole Index is a footnote to history, offering a short cut to facts about Bible lands, the home of Greek culture, the remodeled Europe after the World War, and the scenes of Oriental uprisings. It lists many of the geographic stories of the century, written with that touch which only timely accounts can give: the discovery of the North and the South Poles, the eruption of Mt. Pelée, the opening of King Tutankhamen's tomb, the San Francisco earthquake, the deepest dive beneath the sea, and man's highest flight.

Convenient Survey of Progress in Several Scientific Fields

It is also a safe-deposit box for places now changed beyond recognition—the reclaimed and drained portions of the Zuider Zee; the court of Ethiopia, whose half-barbarous pomp has been replaced by the suburban English atmosphere of the deposed Emperor's home near Bath, England; and many of America's World War training camps.

The student of science finds recorded here the researches of Alexander Graham Bell and other important men of science in several fields: the progress of aviation, from early experiments with gliders and kites to huge stratosphere balloons and modern sky clipper ships; and pioneering work in long range weather forecasting. The casual reader seeking entertainment with his information can scan a menu of travel and adventure literature ranging from Amundsen or Conrad to the Lindberghs or President Taft.

Bulletin No. 4, February 22, 1937.

For the convenience of those who wish to acquire a copy of the National Geographic Society's newest Cumulative Index, a blank containing full information has been inserted after Bulletin No. 2.

Photograph Courtesy Mississippi River Commission

A "SAND BOIL" NEEDS NO DOCTOR, BUT AN ENGINEER

When rivers gain weight and violence with floods, pressure within them may block underground tributary streams or force water backward through weak spots under a levee and, in the dry land beyond the levee, causing a watery upheaval of the earth, or a "sand boil." Each sand boil is treated with a little private levee of its own, encircling the break with a sandbag dam. Sediment in the muddy trickle tends to stop the flow. Sand boils were a special menace to Cairo, Illinois, where the flood force of both the Ohio and the Mississippi cut off outlets of many water channels under the city (see Bulletin No. 2).

A hill across the highway from the present house is famed as the locale of another act in the drama of "Strong-Man" George. Here he clung to the back of an untamed colt until it bucked itself to death. During the Washington Bicentennial celebration five years ago, the hill was the scene of a unique ceremony on November 4, to commemorate the first President's initiation into Masonry. In a hilltop tent, a collateral descendant also named George Washington was initiated.

The Ferry Farm was young George's home between the ages of seven and twenty-two, when he fell heir to Mount Vernon. Much of this period, however, was spent visiting his two half-brothers or toiling through the country on surveying expeditions. In 1743 George was called home hastily to stand beside his father's deathbed. Thereafter he found himself at eleven the owner of the Ferry Farm, the six-room "Home House," and a score of slaves. An inventory reveals that his heritage also included draped bedsteads, silk curtains, silver spoons, china of "blew and gilt," pewter plates, and other elegance-in-the-wilderness furniture.

This home, now vanished, is the only one in which George's immediate family circle was complete. His father and his baby sister, Mildred, died there.

The Washington family ferry operated across the unbridged Rappahannock to Fredericksburg. Here young George received daily instruction from Rector Marye, after he had exhausted the schooling of Master Hobby, whose home still stands at Falmouth, farther up the river. The famous "Rules for Civility" are supposed to have been penned carefully and laboriously at the Ferry Farm.

Note: Other views and descriptions of Ferry Farm, home of George Washington, will be found in "Travels of George Washington," *National Geographic Magazine*, January, 1932; and "Virginia—A Commonwealth That Has Come Back," April, 1929.

Bulletin No. 5, February 22, 1937.

Photograph courtesy of Virginia State Conservation and Development Commission

THE FIRST "COUNTRY" OF THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY

The Ferry Farm (right center), through which cuts a tree-shaded section of the King's Highway on the right, was inherited by George Washington when he was only eleven. It was the Washington family homestead until, at the outbreak of the Revolution, the prudent widow Mary moved into the comparative safety of the town across the Rappahannock, Fredericksburg. In 1772 George recorded in his dairy: "Rid over the River to my plantations, and examined the Land at the upper place." Later he sold it to his friend, Col. Mercer.

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